



GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE ^{OF} AMERICA

DIRECT ARCHDIOCESAN DISTRICT OFFICE OF EDUCATION

ARCHDIOCESAN COUNCIL MEETING

April 30 and May 1, 2009
The New York Marriott Marquis

THE DIRECT ARCHDIOCESAN OFFICE OF EDUCATION REPORT

By: Maria Makedon, Director

The *Direct Archdiocesan District Office of Education* serves the District's parochial day schools as well as the afternoon Greek language schools. For the 2008-09 school year, there are **5,493** students enrolled in grades from pre-K to 12th in the *District's* community schools.

The *Direct Archdiocesan District Office of Education* provides **a)** professional training for the teachers (of Greek and English curricula); **b)** appropriate materials for teaching Greek as a second language; and **c)** *The Comprehensive Examination in Modern Greek* for the evaluation of student learning. Also, the *District Office* organizes events that promote the Hellenic cultural heritage and foster the teaching/learning experience.

In addition, the *District Office* represents the 10 Greek Orthodox parochial day schools of New York City at the federal, state, and local education authorities. The participation of the *District Office* in various conferences and committee meetings, notably *the Standing Committee of Religious & Independent Schools in New York City*, has initiated contacts that have helped provide the parochial day schools with various services and resources funded by the federal government.

The major projects and events of the *Direct Archdiocesan District Office of Education* that have taken place since November 2008 are as follows:

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The District's Annual Staff-Development Seminar

The annual *Staff Development Seminar* for the District schools took place on **Tuesday, November 4, 2008** (*Election Day*), at St. Demetrios School, Astoria, under the auspices of His Eminence **Archbishop Demetrios** of America.

The *Seminar*, which featured a series of 15 workshops that covered all levels of instruction from pre-K to high school (English and Greek departments), was attended by 247 day and afternoon school teachers.



The workshops were conducted by prominent in the field of education professionals such as the following: *Dr. Patricia Vardin*, director/Early Childhood Education, Manhattanville College; *Dr. Joanne Robertson*, *Dr. Patrick McCabe*, and *Dr. Smita Guha* of St. John's University/School of Literacy; *Dr. Sharon Freedman*, NYC Department of Education; *Ms. Haroula Ntalla*, Brooklyn College/School of Education (CUNY); *Mr. Sheldon Shulman*, director/The Human Connections Institute; and *Dr. Bryan Smith*, director/Orthodox Schools Association.

The 24th Annual Conference for Administrators of Independent & Religious Schools

His Eminence **Archbishop Demetrios** received this year's **Leadership in Education Award** at the *24th Annual Conference for Administrators of Independent and Religious Schools* that took place on **November 17 & 18, 2008**, in Albany, New York.



The Archbishop addressed an audience of more than **400** educators of religious and independent schools who had gathered from all regions of the New York State. Great was also the participation of the 10 NYC Greek Orthodox parochial day schools that were represented by the parish priests, principals, and teachers. Fr. Patric Legato, dean of St. Sophia Church, Albany said the invocation.

The *Conference for Administrators of Independent and Religious Schools* offers the opportunity to the administrators of faith-based schools in the State of New York to attend workshops and meet with representatives of the State Education Department. For the first time this year, participants were joined by the **New York State Board of Regents**.

The *Conference* is sponsored by the *New York State Coalition of Independent & Religious Schools*, which is comprised of the following organizations: the *Agudath Israel of America*, the *Association of Christian Schools International*, the *Board of Jewish Education*, the *Lutheran Schools Association*, the *NYS Association of Independent Schools*, and the *NYS Catholic Conference*. The *Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America* is one of its affiliate organizations.

Two Workshops on the EAROBICS Software Program

The *Direct Archdiocesan District Office of Education* organized two workshops on **March 9 & 10, 2009**, at St. Demetrios of Astoria, in order to train the parochial day school teachers of grades

K – 3rd on how to use the **Software Program EAROBICS**, which our schools had acquired through federal funds earmarked for Language Arts (Reading).

The *District Office* was instrumental in securing additional funds this year from the **New York City Department of Education/Bureau of Reimbursable Programs** to cover the cost for the workshops as well as the purchase of additional software that was needed. The total cost of the workshops and materials was **\$26,900**.

EVALUATION OF STUDENT LEARNING

The Comprehensive Examination in Modern Greek

The *Comprehensive Examination in Modern Greek* will be administered this year on **Tuesday, June 23, 2009** (9:15 a.m.–12:15 p.m.), to public and community school students in grades 8th and above, in the State of New York and some areas of New Jersey, Connecticut, and Virginia.



The *2009 Examination* is currently under development. It will eventually be sent for evaluation to the *University at Buffalo/The State University of New York* and the **Institute of Modern Greek Studies/The Aristotle University of Thessaloniki**.

The *Comprehensive Examination in Modern Greek* is a foreign language test that assesses student proficiency in *listening, speaking, reading, and writing* Modern Greek following the standards of the New York State Education Department’s Syllabus: “*Modern Languages for Communication.*” Public and parochial school students who successfully pass the *Examination* receive foreign language credits in high school and, in some cases, in colleges and universities.

It is worth noting that the **New York State Education Department/Office of School Operations and Management Services** has recently approved of the reimbursement of our Greek Orthodox parochial schools for the administration of the *Comprehensive Examination in Modern Greek* from the State Mandated Services Aid. That means that our parochial day schools will be reimbursed for the time teachers spend to prepare, administer, and grade the *Comprehensive Examination in Modern Greek* as they do for all other mandated by the State services.

The decision of the **Office of School Operations and Management Services/New York State Education** was based on documents submitted by the *Direct Archdiocesan District Office of Education*, which proved the *Examination’s* validity and showed that students receive **Regents credit**. It will go into effect immediately with the *2009 Examination*.

PROMOTING EXCELLENCE & CULTURAL HERITAGE

The Spelling Bee Competition

The District's *Annual Spelling Bee Competition* for the students of the parochial day schools of metropolitan New York was held on **January 8, 2009**, at the Archdiocesan headquarters, Manhattan.

Jordan Massey, a seventh-grade student of the "A. Fantis" Parochial School of SS. Constantine & Helen, Brooklyn, won the first place among the 10 school bee champions who participated. **Jordan** represented the Greek Orthodox parochial schools at the *Daily News Spelling Bee Finals*, which took place on March 24, 2009 at Hunter College in Manhattan and won **6th place**.



Alexander Adamis, an eighth grader of *The Cathedral School* of Holy Trinity, Manhattan, was the runner-up. **Mrs. Georgia Eleftheriou**, an English language teacher of "D.G.K." Parochial Day School of Holy Cross, Brooklyn, pronounced the words.

His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios of America congratulated the winners and presented each champion with an *Award Certificate* and a gift card of the Barnes & Noble bookstore.

The Three Hierarchs Award of Excellence



In celebration of Greek Letters, 15 students who excelled on the *2008 Comprehensive Examination in Modern Greek* (received a score of 100) were recognized in a special ceremony on Friday, **January 30th, 2009**, at the Holy Trinity Cathedral, in Manhattan.

Following the Divine Liturgy of the Three Hierarchs, His Eminence **Archbishop Demetrios** of America presented the recipients with *The Three Hierarchs Award of Excellence* and an icon of the Three

Hierarchs.

Archbishop Demetrios spoke to an audience of **350** students, administrators, and teachers of the New York City parochial day schools about the lives and contribution of the Fathers of our Church, the Holy Three Hierarchs, and the importance of speaking the Greek language and living the Greek Orthodox heritage. Present were also the Consul General of Greece, Mrs. Agi Balta and the Education Counselor of the Ministry of Education of Greece, Mr. George Vlikides.

APPROPRIATE MATERIALS & RESOURCES

The Kindergarten Curriculum



The demand for *The Curriculum for the Kindergarten* that was published by the *Direct Archdiocesan District Office of Education* was so great that it is currently **out-of-stock**. **1,000** copies have been distributed “*gratis*” to the community schools around the country.

The *Curriculum for the Kindergarten* was created by the *Direct Archdiocesan District Office of Education* with the purpose to assist the teachers, who teach Greek as a second language to young children. Its publication was made possible due to the generous support of the “*Stavros S. Niarchos*” **Foundation**.

Find Our Book Catalog Online: <http://www.education.goarch.org>

A *Catalog* of recommended books and materials for the teaching/learning of the Greek language and culture that was published by the *Direct Archdiocesan District Office of Education* is now available **online**. Prospective buyers may download our *Catalog* from the *District Office’s* web page at <http://www.education.goarch.org> or the *Orthodox Marketplace* www.orthodoxmarketplace.com.

All book orders including orders for certificates and diplomas will be handled by the *Orthodox Marketplace*.

THE DISTRICT OFFICE: REPRESENTING THE PAROCHIAL DAY SCHOOLS

The *Direct Archdiocesan District Office of Education* continues, with great zeal, to represent the New York City parochial day schools to the education authorities on all levels – federal, state, and City.

As a member of the *NYC Standing Committee of Religious & Independent Schools*, the director of the *Direct Archdiocesan District Office of Education*, Mrs. Maria Makedon, participates in conferences and meetings that take place at the *New York City Department of Education*, Brooklyn and the *Archdiocese of New York* (Roman Catholic), Manhattan.

As a result of the *District Office’s* involvement with the *NYC Standing Committee of Religious & Independent Schools* and collaboration with representatives of the *Bureau of Reimbursable Services/NYC Department of Education*, our parochial day schools in New York have benefited greatly by receiving various services and resources paid from federal funds.

For the 2008-2009 school year for example, the NYC parochial day schools were allotted a little over **\$72,000**. This money was generated based on the number of **eligible** students from the Greek Orthodox parochial day schools and channeled to the schools in the form of professional development and teaching materials. Half of the funds went toward the **professional development** of teachers and the rest was spent for the purchase of **teaching materials**.

For the first time, the *Archdiocesan District Office of Education* was designated by the **Bureau of Reimbursable Services/NYC Department of Education** as the coordinator for the equitable distribution of funds among the NYC parochial day schools. Specifically, the director of the *District Office*, Mrs. Maria Makedon, was afforded the responsibility to affirm all teacher applications for professional development and coordinate the purchase of materials through various vendors contracted by the NYC Department of Education.

Conferences & Meetings

Since the last Archdiocesan Council Meeting (November 6-7, 2008), the director of the *Direct Archdiocesan District Education*, Mrs. Maria Makedon, has participated in the following conferences, meetings, and events:

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| November 12, 2008 | NYC Department of Education – Meeting of <i>NYC Standing Committee of Religious & Independent Schools</i> . |
| December 15, 2008 | Archdiocese of New York (Roman Catholic) - NYC Religious Schools Task Force Committee meeting on Title I Funds . |
| January 13, 2009 | Luncheon in honor of retiring Dr. Catherine Hickey , Secretary For Education of the Archdiocese of New York (Roman Catholic). |
| March 2, 2009 | City Hall – Tweed Headquarters - Meeting of <i>NYC Standing Committee of Religious & Independent Schools</i> with Kathleen Grimm , <i>Deputy Chancellor for Finance & Administration/NYC Department of Education</i> . |
| March 18, 2009 | NYC Department of Education – Meeting of <i>NYC Standing Committee of Religious & Independent Schools</i> . |

Principals Meetings



The *Direct Archdiocesan Office of Education* holds regular meetings with the New York City parochial day school principals.

At these meetings, the *District Office* invites officials from the **State Education Department** as well as from the **NYC Department of Education** and other City agencies, in order to enlighten the principals on various issues of interest to their schools.

Two such meetings have taken place since the last Archdiocesan Council meeting. One was held on **December 3, 2008**, at St. Demetrios High School, Astoria, with guests **Ms. Sharon Spence**, a public health epidemiologist, and her assistant **Ms. Betty Sanchez**, from the *Bureau of Immunizations/NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene*.

The principals met again on **February 9, 2009**, at St. Demetrios High School, Astoria. This time our guest was **Ms. Mary Kurutz**, Sr. Administrative analyst at the *Office of Grants Management/the State Education Department*. Using the Internet, Ms. Kurutz gave the principals a brief training on how to do the calculations for their applications and provided one-to-one assistance, in order to help the Greek Orthodox day schools receive full reimbursement for services that are mandated by the State Education Department.

School Visitations



The parochial day school principals had long expressed their wish for the director of the *District Office of Education* to visit their schools. Thus, in the last four weeks, Mrs. Maria Makedon visited all the day schools in New York City and witnessed the incredible work that is being done to offer a sound academic program that will make the schools competitive in their neighborhoods. (A detailed report is forthcoming.)

Following is the schedule of Mrs. Makedon's visits to the area parochial day schools:

February 24, 2009	St. Demetrios Elementary School, Astoria
February 26, 2009	"A. Fantis" Day School, Brooklyn
February 27, 2009	"W. Spyropoulos" School of St. Nicholas, Flushing
March 05, 2009	Three Hierarchs School, Brooklyn
March 11, 2009	St. Demetrios High School, Astoria
March 12, 2009	D.G.K. School of Holy Cross, Brooklyn
March 13, 2009	Greek-American-Institute, Bronx
March 17, 2009	Jamaica Day School of St. Demetrios
March 19, 2009	Cathedral School, Manhattan
March 20, 2009	School of the Transfiguration, Corona
March 26, 2009	St. Spyridon School, Manhattan



3/27/09